

**CITY OF NEWBURGH
SUSTAINABLE MASTER PLANNING**

Culture and Heritage Focus Group

Meeting Notes from Committee Meeting Held on November 16, 2005

In attendance:

- Garin Baker
- Marge Bell (briefly)
- Kippy Boyle
- Kevin Burke
- Frank Den Danto III
- Paul Ellis
- Karen Heroy
- Sara Pasti

Sara provided an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the various components of the planning process, including the tasks of the Steering Committee (external process and community visioning through questionnaires), Focus Groups (inventory of assets in focus areas), Stakeholder Meetings (joint meetings of all key participants) and Coordination Team (support for all groups).

The group reviewed and discussed the questionnaires. Questions included:

- Will the questionnaires be distributed to City residents only, or will property and business owners who do not live in the City also be included?
- Will the following places be included in the input process: Downing Park, churches, grocery stores, Mt. St. Mary's College, local schools?
- How will the answers to the questions be tabulated, as the answers may require some interpretation by those tabulating responses?

Sara indicated that questionnaires will also be printed in local newspapers. Group members wondered whether they could also be included in the Chamber of Commerce News so that businesses located in Newburgh would be able to respond.

Suggestions for expanding the audience pool for questionnaires included:

- Assign the filling out of questionnaires to Fourth Grade classes studying local history. If students are given an assignment from their teachers to return with questionnaires completed by family members, this should both increase awareness of the process and ensure a broader response.
- Encourage High School English teachers to assign their students to fill out questionnaires as part of a class assignment in essay writing.

The group discussed whether it would be possible to impact current discussions on land use in Newburgh prior to completing the Master Plan, and talked about their and other group's desire to sit at the table with the various developers and other property owners now making plans to build out Newburgh.

- Garin volunteered to draft a letter to the City Manager regarding Stakeholder participation in such conversations.

The group considered the possibility of creating an advocacy group composed of representatives from all 9 focus areas. The "ombudsmen" selected from each group would be responsible for going to City Council meetings and workshops, and to planning and zoning board meetings, to learn about future projects and to notify focus groups about upcoming projects of interest.

- Kippy, who regularly attends City Council workshops, agreed to serve as one of these ombudsmen and report back on what she learns.

Selection of Group Facilitator/Notetaker: Paul Ellis and Karen Heroy volunteered to serve as Co-Facilitators. Karen will run meetings and Paul will serve as the point person who sends out minutes, contacts members about meetings, and follows up on assigned tasks. Paul will also serve as liaison to other group Facilitators, and should be listed as the point of contact for this group on the web-site. Sara agreed to serve as Interim Notetaker until another volunteer could be found. She will forward notes to Co-Facilitators for review and forwarding to group members.

Review of Asset Inventory Worksheets: Group members will review the asset inventory worksheets and return with suggestions at the next meeting. Among the items discussed were the need to:

- Expand the list of venues and programs to be included on the list of Newburgh's assets
- Identify contacts at each of the venues and programs
- Develop categories of organizations in the visual arts, performing arts, and historic/cultural preservation

Discussion took place regarding the possible use of "renegade" art spaces in vacant buildings in Newburgh, much as Anita Durst has made use of such spaces in midtown Manhattan for time periods from 6 months to one year. The group discussed the need for a special Certificate of Occupancy to cover temporary usage of space for this purpose. Sara indicated that she would locate language from the building code in Seattle, which permits the temporary use of buildings.

Regular Meetings. The group agreed to meet on a regular basis on the Third Wednesday of every month at 6PM. The next Culture & Heritage meeting will take place on Wednesday, December 21st at 6PM at City Hall.